

Members Meet, Jam at CJ's

Central Texas Jazz Society members gathered at **Cactus Jack's** in Temple on Saturday, October 11, for a little business and a lot of pleasure, at CTJS's first Membership meeting.

TJO To Basie You Mucho

The **Temple Jazz Orchestra** will be on its Basie-est behavior this weekend, as TJO presents a pair of concerts Saturday and Sunday dedicated to the Count Basie Orchestra.

TJO will perform Saturday, Nov. 8, at the Mary Alice Marshall Performing Arts Center at Temple College in Temple, and Sunday, Nov. 9, in Georgetown. The concerts are sponsored by the **Central Texas Jazz Society** and mark the start of fundraising for TJO's planned trip to Europe in July 2009.

The concerts will explore the legacy of the Count with a program of classic Basie charts. TJO will perform "Moten Swing", "88 Basie Street", "Basie Straight Ahead", "In A Mellotone", "Magic Flea", "The Heat's On" and others from the Basie book.

Performances by the Region Jazz Ensembles will begin the Saturday concert, which starts at 6:30 pm. The Sunday performance starts at 4:00 pm. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students.



TJO's latest CD, *Temple Jazz Orchestra featuring Gordon Goodwin*, will be on sale at concerts.

The evening began with a brief presentation by president **Larry Simonette**, who welcomed the crowd and then presented the chairmen of the three key working committees. **Johnny Walker**, chair of the **Development Committee**, reported on his committee, which is responsible for for such activities as membership drives, newsletter development, and the jam session itself. The Cactus Jack's session was the first of four the committee has planned for the year, with sessions 3/7/09 (in Waco), 3/27/09 (Las Casas in Temple, in conjunction with the Temple Jazz Festival), and 5/9/09 at Sorge's in Temple.



Larry Simonette (left); Brent Colwell

Brent Colwell, chairman of the **Scholarship Committee**, reported on progress in establishing a scholarship program for young students and on the growing interest and participation of band directors in the effort. **Casey Stanislaw**, who heads the **Fund Raising Committee**, reported on projects under way for the coming calendar year.

Then it was time for music. The session house band (**Ben Irom**, piano; **Vince Bryce**, bass; and **Michael Morris**, drums), plus trombonist **Gary Smith**, started out with three selections: "There Is No Greater Love", "Afro Blue" (with a quote of the "Theme from

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See The World... ...Hear the Band

The **Temple Jazz Orchestra** is traveling to Europe next summer, and you can go along for the ride.

TJO will be in Europe from June 28 2009 through July 12 2009. The band will play four concerts, three of them at major jazz festivals—**Jazz a Vienne** in Vienne, France; the **Montreux Jazz Festival** in Montreux Switzerland, and the **Northsea Jazz Festival** in Rotterdam, Holland. The band will also play a concert in Lyon France, with **Le Big Band d l'Ouest**. Around these concerts tour members will spend time in France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland, with stopovers in Paris, Montreux, Lucerne, and Amsterdam, and two river cruises, on the Siene and on the Rhine.

As an added bonus, Temple College is offering the chance to earn college credit while on tour. **Gary Smith** will be teaching "MUSI 1310: American Music-Jazz" on the trip, covering the history of the music and of the festivals which students will visit.

Time to sign up for this once-in-a-lifetime experience is short. Contact Gary at 254-298-8557 for details.

Membership Notes

At its September meeting the board of the Central Texas Jazz Society unanimously agreed to change the membership year to run from October 1 through September 30, rather than the original January 1 through December 30.

The new membership year reflects the involvement of CTJS in educational activities which are centered on the school year. It simplifies planning and works better both administratively and operationally.

With the exception of our newest members, all members are paid through January 1, 2009, and this group's dues for '09 will be reduced to reflect the partial year, with renewal in September.

New members who joined last month: Lampasas HS Band Directors **Glen Grant**, **Richard Hooper** and **Robert Leyva**; Bryan HS Band Directors **Chris R Pulley**, **Rob Towell** and **Zane Taylor** (all Institutional Members), and regular members **John** and **Karen Batson** (Temple), **Vince Bryce** (Waco), **Tram Kelly** (Waco), and **Cynthia** and **Richard Strahm** (Sun City).

Meet the Board...

Larry Simonette	President
Dr. Benjamin Irom	Vice President
Greg Bashara	Secretary
Bill Berning	Treasurer
Thomas Fairlie	Artistic Director
Alex Parker	Board of Directors
Brent Colwell	Board of Directors
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COUNT BASIE... *Swing & the Single Note*

The rhythm section parts to trombonist **Phil Wilson's** arrangement "*Basically Blues*" (one of hundreds of charts written in the style of Count Basie) contains these instructions: "BASIE SOUND - Piano strives to play with his left hand tied behind his back--while bass and guitar try to sound like piano player's tied up left hand".

Regardless of its value as a guide to rhythm players, Wilson's folksy formula does provide a succinct description of the Basie rhythm section in action, the solid bass and guitar locking together like a single performer while the piano contributes a few rhythmically precise, surgically accurate "plinks". The development of that sound, and of the band that Basie built on its supple foundation, is one of those serendipitous stories that often lie behind revolutions.

Born in Redneck New Jersey August 21 1904, **William Basie** (the royal designation "Count" was bestowed in the '30's by a radio announcer) learned piano early from his mother and studied with some of the great Harlem pianists, including Fats Waller. In his 20's he traveled extensively on the vaudeville circuits as a solo pianist, accompanist and music director for blues singers, dancers and comedians.

Basie was stranded in Kansas City in 1927 when a tour he belonged to suddenly broke up. He chose to stay on in KC, playing piano in a silent movie house. A blues singer named **Jimmy Rushing** heard him and urged him to sit in with **Walter Page's Blue Devils**, whom he joined in 1928. When bassist Page's group broke up in late 1929, Basie and Page joined **Bennie Moten's** band. That association lasted into the mid '30's, but by 1935 Basie was leading a nine-piece group of his own (with Page and several others from Moten's former band). The band broadcast live regularly from its gig at the Reno Club in Kansas City, and one of those



Pianist William "Count" Basie

broadcasts was heard in Chicago by **John Hammond**, a promoter and jazz aficionado. With Hammond's support Basie enlarged his group to sixteen pieces, moved it to New York and by 1937 was recording for Decca.

The so-called "all American rhythm section" at the core of that band had by then achieved the distinctive sound Phil Wilson tried to describe in his instructions. Basie and his colleagues--**Freddie Green** (who joined in 1937), guitar; Page on bass and **Jo Jones**, drums--smoothed out the jazz rhythm of the time, made it more of an evenly stressed four beats to the bar. Jones moved the main pulse from the bass drum up to the cymbals, lightening the sound, Green strummed barely audible chords on the beat to lock with Page's powerful, accurate lines, while Basie contributed spare, rhythmically precise interjections.

This immediately identifiable Basie Sound undergirded a number of major jazz soloists, most prominently **Lester Young** (whose distinctive approach to the tenor saxophone changed the jazz sound of that instrument permanently), as well as **Jimmy Rushing**, vocal; **Herschel Evans**, tenor sax;

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Jammin' at Cactus Jack's

...Photos by Casey Stanislaw



Garry Smith, Ben Irom, Larry Simonette



Ben Irom, Gary Smith, Mike Morris, Vince Bryce



Tom Fairlie joins other listeners



Gary Smith, Glen Grant, Stephen Grant



Trumpets X 3: Sparky Thomason, Tim Cates, Byron Swann, and pianist Dave Wild



Ralph Aurillo, Mike Morris



Ralph Aurillo, Dave Wild, Greg Bashara, Josh Spurling

Heard & Seen...

Kenny Barron

Kenny Barron stopped off at Baylor in Waco on October 24 for a clinic and concert, showing in a few hours why his resume is dotted with the names of jazz legends.



His clinic that afternoon was just Barron, a nine-foot grand, and a room full of students. He talked about his influences, and provided remarkable demonstrations of the styles that shaped his approach—channeling Tommy Flanagan, Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, McCoy Tyner, and an incredible Art Tatum-esque version of “Body and Soul” that captured Tatum’s genius.



Barron’s evening performance was equally rewarding. Joined by his trio—Miriam Sullivan, bass; Francisco Mela, drums—Barron played one long set, mostly with the trio (with one solo piece). Mela was fun to watch and a powerhouse of energy, matching Barron. Sullivan seemed more the



photos by Greg Bashara

backbone of the trio—her solos were sonorous extensions of her bass lines rather than the extroverted explosions of the others.

They opened with Bonfa’s “Manha de Carnival”, followed by an up-tempo “Softly As In A Morning Sunrise”—Barron fast and fluid, totally relaxed at the center of the whirlwind. “Blame It On My Youth”, was the essence of the art of the jazz ballad, with a rich out-of-tempo introduction, and a solo built of dancing 16th and 32nd notes.



An original, “Now Samba”, was next, another out-of-tempo introduction leading to a sparkling solo which rode on the ebb and flow of Mela’s propulsive drumming. Barron’s piano solo “Song for Abdullah” was dedicated to South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, reflecting Ibrahim’s heritage in its even eighth-note pulse.

“And Then Again” was a fast blues with fluid bebop lines and a great solo from Mela. “Mikara’s Song”, written for Barron’s granddaughter, had some unusual harmonies built on an ascending bass line. Barron brought the trio back for an encore, a Latin song with a “Poinciana” like rhythm. A satisfying close to an uncommon Friday.



Heard & Seen...

Turtle Island Quartet

Generally speaking, strings don't swing. There have been exceptions of course—think **Stuff Smith, Ray Nance, Stephane Grapelli**—but handing **John Coltrane's** “Moment's Notice” to a string quartet ought to be like handing “La bohème” to a barbershop quartet.

And then there's the **Turtle Island Quartet**, whose clinic and concert at Baylor Sep 23 gave that stereotype a buzz cut. TIQ is a jazz group masquerading as string players, using tricks, technique and familiarity with the tradition to adapt the classical format to jazz.



TIQ's clinic featured **David Balakrishnan** and **Mads Tolling**, teaching a Baylor student quartet how to play jazz. Bowing techniques, playing jazz time, phrasing lines to get a jazz feel—the discussion showed the effort it takes to get strings to swing.



photos by Greg Bashara

TIQ played two sets at the intimate Roxy Grove Hall that night. On what would have been Coltrane's 82nd birthday, their first set drew from their most recent CD, *A Love Supreme: The Legacy of John Coltrane*, starting with “Moment's Notice”, propelled by cellist **Mark Summers'** walking line. “Naima” captured the meditative flavor of that ballad; John McLaughlin's “La Danse du Bonheur” explored modal Coltrane territory.



Coltrane's master work, the suite *A Love Supreme*, is indelibly linked to the original performance, and TIQ's lack of drums could have proven fatal. Yet Balakrishnan's arrangement captured much of the power and passion of the original, giving new insights into the composition.



TIQ's second (non-Coltrane) set included jazz standards (“Bolivia”, Corea's “Señor Mouse”) originals by Balakrishnan and Summers (the latter's “Waltz for Pudgy Bird” was notable), and even a jazz fusion classic, Corea's “No Mystery”. Two excellent sets by a jazz group, effortlessly swinging, with nary a hint of Mantovani...

Count Basie

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Lester Young

Buck Clayton and **Harry 'Sweets' Edison**, trumpet, and trombonists **Benny Morton** and **Dickie Wells**. It also propelled an orchestra extremely adept at creating memorable "head arrangements"

by "setting riffs" (improvising simple yet superbly swinging charts on the spot by using short rhythmic phrases known as riffs).

Gradually Basie began to use more formally written charts based on that original style, and he maintained the band through the 40's. The economics of the music business forced him to slim down to a six to nine piece group from 1950 to 1952, but he reorganized the full band in '52 and a series of tours and recordings helped it become a jazz institution. **Joe Williams** joined the band as its fulltime male vocalist in 1954, and within a year he brought it commercial success, starting with his version of "Every Day I Have The Blues".

The "Atomic Basie" band (so-called from one of its successful albums) has been likened to a sleek Cadillac in comparison to the 30's band's Stutz Bearcat, and that smooth, powerful sound owed much to great arrangers like **Neal Hefti**, **Ernie Wilkins**, **Benny Carter**, **Frank Foster**, and **Sammy Nestico**. Basie also recorded several albums with **Frank Sinatra**.

Basie died in 1984; the band continued to perform, first under **Thad Jones'** direction and later under **Frank Foster**. But Basie and the band left behind an enduring legacy of swing--and generations of pianists with their left hand clenched behind their back.

Members Meet and Jam

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Rocky" when UT's win over OU was announced), and "Recordame". They were joined by the **Grants**, father **Glen** (Lampasas HS Jazz Band Director) and son **Stephen**, both on tenor sax, for a blues. One of the evening's highlights followed, as retired Navy Band (and former band director) **Ralph Aurillo** sat in on alto saxophone, on "Misty". Trumpeter **Lee "Sparky" Thomason** (freshly arrived from a nearby gig) joined in on "All The Things You Are", followed by "Take Five" (with **Dave Wild** on piano).

The set continued with "Au Privave" (**Tim Cates** in on trumpet, Thomason on keys, Wild on soprano sax), "So What" (**Byron Swann** joining on trumpet, Temple College student **Josh Spurling** on drums), and "There will Never Be Another You" (**Greg Bashara** joining on tenor). Next up was "Desafinado" and "Satin Doll" (Aurillo on keys), "Autumn Leaves", and "Route 66" (**Casey Stanislaw** on vocals and the Grants returning on tenor saxophones). The session moved into non-traditional territory with Iron back on keys and Bashara on saxophone, tackling Steely Dan staples "Do It Again" and "Peg". A final latin tune finished out the session.

Casey Stanislaw and Larry Simonette contributed to this article.
See page 4 for more photos from the session



As a member of CTJS, we know you will continue to support live jazz in Central Texas. We have one favor to ask: Please encourage your friends and neighbors to do so as well. Many thanks for supporting the **Central Texas Jazz Society**.